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SUBJECT: DARFUR PEACE TALKS: NEXT STEPS

REF: ABUJA 798

1. (SBU) Summary: On April 19, African Union Chief Negotiator Sam Ibok discussed potential next steps for putting forward the entire peace deal with USDEL. During the same meeting, AU Special Representative Baba Gana Kingibe said that there will be a transition from AMIS to a re-hatted force in Darfur and that he is prepared to travel with UN Special Representative for Sudan Jan Pronk on a pre-assessment mission. Meanwhile, the Movements continue consultations with Vice President Ali Osman Taha and Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) members, with somewhat mixed results. Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) leader Minni Minnawi outlined his talks with Vice President Taha for the international partners. Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) members met Taha for the first time on April 18 with AU mediators present. End Summary.

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AU MEDIATION
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2. (SBU) USDEL met with AU Chief Negotiator Sam Ibok and Special Representative Baba Gana Kingibe on April 19. Ibok wanted to know the status of the cease-fire discussion and final security arrangements document. Khartoum CDA Hume said that the main sticking points on the cease-fire remain policing, responsibility for border control, and the disarmament of the janjaweed. (retel) The discussions are at a point where the final security arrangements document needs to be given to the parties. USDEL security expert and lawyer finalized the security arrangements document, set to be given to the parties on April 20. Ibok agreed with USDEL that the parties are ready for the entire package and that the AU wanted to put it forward by week's end (April 21). He asked for advice on how to proceed. CDA Hume said that the final security arrangements paper needs to go to the parties on April 20. All of the issues would then have been tabled. Then, the entire package, including power, wealth, and security, could be briefed to the parties, followed by the document within 24 hours.

3. (SBU) Kingibe clarified the AU's position on the AMIS-UN transition. Kingibe said that the AU will move forward on the basis of the GOS's statement that it would consider an AMIS-UN transition if there was a peace deal. Given the momentum of the peace talks, it is prudent for the AU and UN to work together on an assessment. Kingibe is preparing to travel with Pronk to Darfur to begin an assessment on the transition needs. Kingibe said that the GOS will have to accept the probability that there will be a UN force structure that includes the south, Darfur, and possibly, the East in the future. They may be a UN Force Commander with a deputy for each region. For Darfur, Kingibe said that the

deputy would be an African and the character of the force will remain African.

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TAHA CONSULTATIONS
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14. (SBU) The hefty GOS delegation, led by VP Taha and recently augmented by Security Chief Salah Gosh, continues active round robin meetings with the movements. The results are mixed. SLM leader Minni Minnawi's early meeting some ten days ago seemed to provide the reassurance that Khartoum was prepared to make a deal. Much of that earlier optimism dissipated during the subsequent five sessions. Minni claims Taha offered concessions early and has later reneged. Taha's people say that Minni, when alone, appeared more flexible than when accompanied by some of his senior lieutenants.

15. (SBU) During a meeting with the international partners on April 19, Minni expressed concern that the GOS would identify the major points of contention but not negotiate seriously on them. Minni said that the GOS may hope that as the April 30 deadline approached, some framework document would be proposed with the details of decisions to be left to be worked out during the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue. This has been a long-standing fear of the Movements and a "solution" they will continue to reject. There is no indication that the AU intends to pursue such a course.

16. (SBU) One of the major sticking points continues to be the integration of the rebels into the Sudanese Armed Forces. Both sides have accepted the principle of integration but the GOS insists that it must be done on an individual basis determined by SAF needs and rebel combatants' proficiency.

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The Movements acknowledge that eventually their soldiers will become part of the SADF as individuals but insist that during the transition period unit integrity should be maintained. The Movements are especially sensitive to the fact that the GOS has already integrated a number of janjaweed into the ranks without the rigorous vetting that they seem to want to impose on the movements. Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM) members of the GNU delegation, particularly Malik Agar, understand the Movements' position and told us they would attempt to help craft a GOS position, and persuade Taha, Salah Gosh, and Magzoub Al-Kalifa, that unit integration during the transition, lots of training to improve competencies, and then integration into the national forces could be an acceptable compromise.

17. (SBU) Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) members met with Taha on April 18. The meeting was facilitated by the AU mediators, who also attended the meeting. Ibok said the four hour meeting was difficult with JEM restating its positions on power, wealth, and security issues. JEM members, however, told USDEL that they would be willing to continue to meet with Taha. JEM's spokesman, Ahmed Hussein, said that it is important for the Movements to be seen as cooperating with Taha to strengthen his hand against Magzoub. Nonetheless, JEM continues to put out negative press statements about the peace process. The SLM factions, well-aware of JEM's game-playing, say they are considering ways lessen JEM's shenigans.

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COMMENT
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18. (SBU) The African Union now appears onboard to deliver the entire peace package to the parties within 24 hours, as promised.
CAMPBELL